

News Release

Alumna Lauren Stai '12 keeps her Passion for Agronomy

By Itolfe on Friday, July 20, 2012Written by communications assistant and junior Ruth Navarro, a communication major from Crookston, Minn. Photographs taken by Ruth Navarro.



Graduating with a major in agronomy was a farfetched idea for recent graduate Lauren Stai '12. She wasn't raised on a farm and didn't know anything about crops. But after taking up an internship as a crop scout, she was hooked. Recognizing she really enjoyed being out in the field combined with the passion and patience to persevere she decided to major in agronomy at the University of Minnesota, Crookston. Originally from Bemidji, Minn., Stai had considered other universities, but when she toured the U of M, Crookston campus, she knew this was the school for her. Being a woman in this male-dominated profession might have intimidated some, but for Stai it was a challenge that motivated her even more. And it would prove beneficial because when she interviewed for five jobs just before graduating this past spring, she received call backs from all five locations. Knowing she wanted to stay close to home, Stai decided to choose the Williams, Minn.,

location. Stai works for two integrated companies, Northern Farmers Co-op Exchange and Northern Excellence Seed. As an agronomist she's been able to do what she loves and hopes that she can continue to learn everything she can about crops and soil. "I want to be as knowledgeable as I can about my job and get to the point where I can be helpful to farmers," Stai said. Stai's days are filled with riding her four wheeler checking fields for pests, collecting soil samples, and conducting research. She wants to keep the passion for the field and by being more experienced, she believes, she will be the go-to-girl in the future. Stai recounts her days at UMC and credits her success to all the help she got from faculty and staff. She enjoyed the fact that professors were always willing to help and the hands-on aspect made learning interesting. Feeling welcomed made it easy for Stai to fit it. She soon joined the Agronomy Club and was also part of the crop and soils team for North American Colleges of Teachers of Agriculture (NACTA) . Being involved gave Stai vital networking skills that have helped her learn more and stay connected.



UMC gave Stai the skills and tools for her job, but having an optimistic character is something important in this line of work. Stai understands that things change day-by-day and learning to make the best of it is important. "Being optimistic is an important characteristic in this field because weather plays a big role in my job and nothing is guaranteed," Stai said. Listen to Lauren Stai talk about agronomy and choosing her major: In the photos, top, left: Lauren Stai checks beans as part of her work as an agronomist.

Middle, right: Stai loves working outdoors, and even though she was not raised on a farm, she is passionate about agronomy.

Bottom, left: Stai works for two integrated companies, Northern Farmers Co-op Exchange and Northern Excellence Seed.

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2900 University Ave., Crookston, MN 56716
800-862-6466 | 218-281-6510 | umcinfo@umn.edu

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